

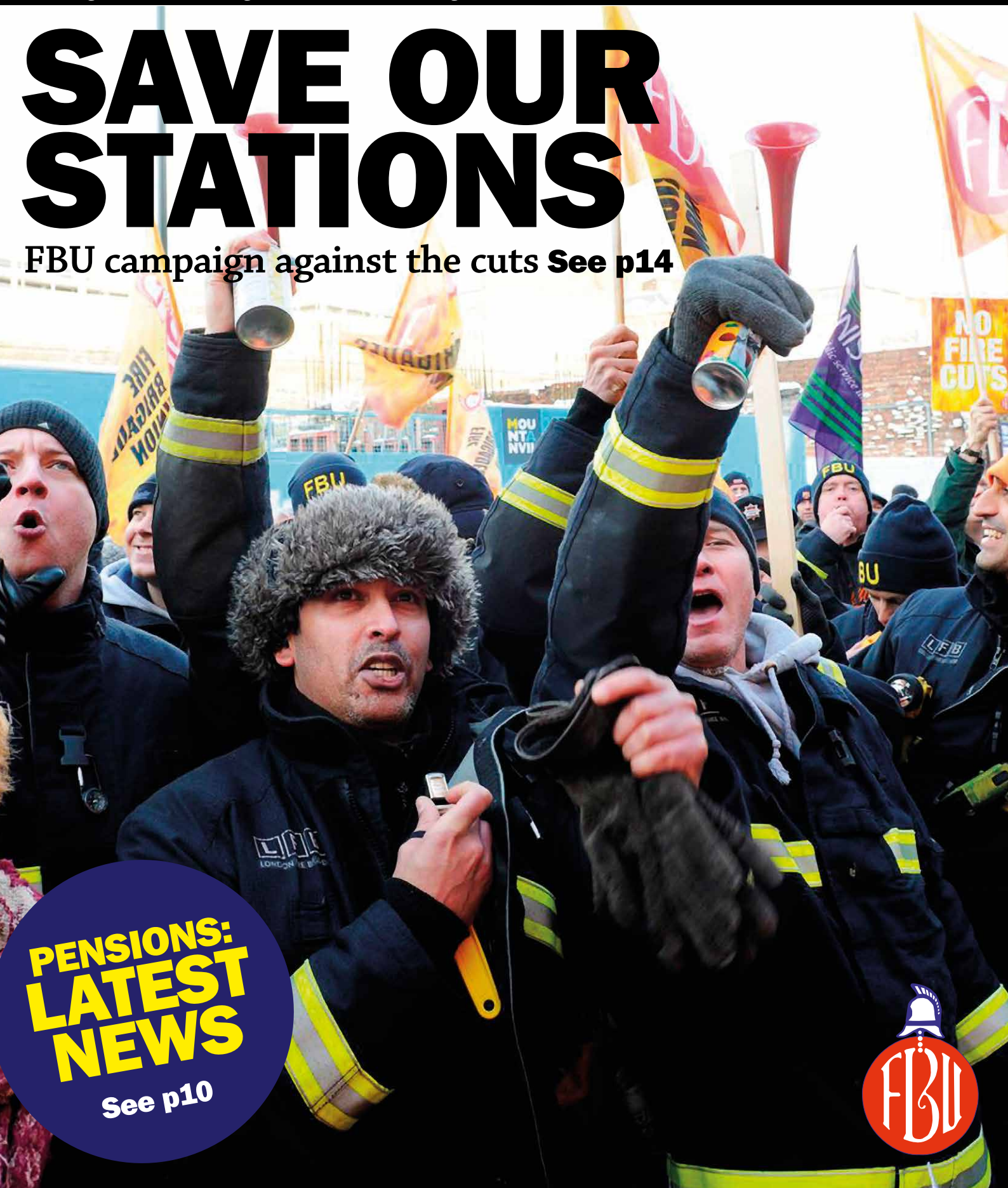
FireFighter

The magazine of the Fire Brigades Union ♦♦♦ www.fbu.org.uk

March 2013

SAVE OUR STATIONS

FBU campaign against the cuts **See p14**



**PENSIONS:
LATEST
NEWS**

See p10





Matt Wrack

Fighting on three fronts

This year is likely to be a watershed for the fire and rescue service and the Fire Brigades Union, with at least three vital matters coming to a head.

First, our battle to defend firefighters' pensions will reach a climax.

Second, the next round of cuts will hit the service.

Third, central government is pushing further its plans to privatise the fire and rescue service.

On every front, the FBU is campaigning to defend firefighters and the communities we serve.

Pensions

In January this year our pensions battle reached a new stage with the publication of the government review into the normal pension age (NPA). The government wants to impose an NPA of 60 on around half of all firefighters currently working in the UK. The FBU has consistently argued that medical evidence does not support this imposition and that there are no redeployment opportunities for older firefighters.

Redeployment was promised by the last government when it imposed the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme in 2006 (with an NPA of 60).

FBU evidence helped convince this government to review the issues and senior union officials provided further materials for the DCLG review, which was chaired by Dr Tony Williams. The union has not

endorsed Dr Williams' report, not least because he has tried to develop a fantasy model where super-fit firefighters can be made to work longer than at present. His model is not based on current entry standards, current fitness regimes or on the current workforce.

Dr Williams' report is very clear that only firefighters recruited at a higher level of fitness than at present and who then undergo special fitness training throughout their career can work longer.

His report provides ample evidence that at least half to two-thirds (and perhaps even

We cannot accept cuts made only to pay for a crisis we did not create and to satisfy the ambitions of Tory politicians to downsize public services

80-90%) of current firefighters will not be fit enough to work beyond 55.

For this reason his report suggests further transitional protection for existing firefighters, so that we are not penalised financially by the new scheme.

The Westminster government has not yet responded to these issues, despite the FBU's insistence that it take note of its own review's findings. Unless ministers listen to the FBU, we may be forced to take industrial action to press our case.

Cuts

The full extent of the Westminster government's austerity measures in relation

to the fire and rescue service has become clear with the latest announcement of cuts.

Central government grants to metropolitan and combined fire authorities have been set and they show that the cuts for 2013-14 are more than twice as bad as in the last settlement two years ago.

We know that last time over 1,500 frontline firefighter jobs were cut in a year. If these cuts are implemented, then the service faces reductions to catastrophic levels.

But the FBU is fighting back. Our members and officials have rallied up and down the

service we have devoted our lives to.

Privatisation

The FBU has responded vigorously to a letter from the fire minister Brandon Lewis suggesting the government wants to contract out the entire fire and rescue service.

This is outright privatisation and a threat to every single firefighter – and to the standard of service provided to the public. They have made it clear that the mutuals programme in Cleveland is part of these privatisation plans, designed to fragment and atomise our service, so the vultures from the private sector can pick over the bones of what's left.

They want to privatise so they can make firefighters work longer hours for less pay, making profits that will be funnelled into offshore accounts, avoiding tax and decimating the service to the public. The overwhelming majority of firefighters do not want privatisation, nor is there any public demand for it.

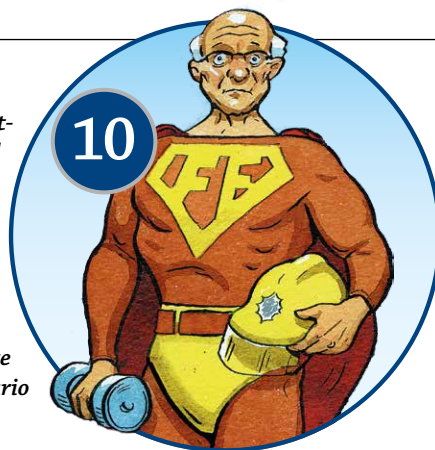
The privatisation threat is real and the FBU has warned of it before. The fire minister's letter has drawn outrage from many politicians and Labour's spokesperson John Healey MP has already said that "Firefighting is a no-go area for privatisation".

The FBU will do everything we can to keep our fire and rescue service as a publicly owned and democratically run service, free from the profiteers who would ruin it.

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LETTER

FBU flyers mobilise public support

The FBU flyers against proposed cuts in Devon and Somerset fire and rescue service are working. They are having a positive effect by raising the issue of cuts and have even resulted in the public getting involved in the consultation to say No Cuts in Fire Cover.

We know this following an email sent to the FBU by a member of the public, which said:

"I'm not a firefighter but I had a flyer through the door this morning about the proposal to cut fire cover in Ilfracombe, a town where huge blazes have occurred over the years. I have sent a response to the Consultation Officer.

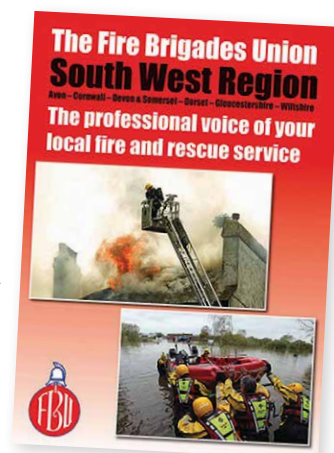
"No need to reply to me, I just thought I'd let you know that the flyers work."

The member of the public then went on to state, in no uncertain terms, that he was opposed to cuts in fire cover and had told the consultation exactly that.

Please give us your support by getting involved in the consultation. You can say No Cuts in Fire Cover in any of the following ways:

- Fill out the consultation response on the fire authority website
- Phone the fire authority
- Post a contribution to the consultation
- Fax to the consultation officer
- Email the consultation officer
- Twitter message to the fire authority
- Post a message on the fire authority's Facebook page.

Tam McFarlane
South West region of the FBU



Mayor must abandon reckless cuts

London

The FBU has welcomed the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority's (LFEPA) decision to resist an order by mayor Boris Johnson to begin major cuts to the London Fire Brigade. He plans to close 12 fire stations, remove 18 engines and slash 520 frontline firefighter posts to save £45m.

In an unprecedented move, the mayor overturned a decision of the LFEPA, meeting in January, to reject the cuts. He instructed fire commissioner Ron Dobson to ignore the vote and to consult the public about the cuts.

But, at an emergency meeting of the authority on 11 February, the commissioner conceded that he did not have the legal power to act on the mayor's instruction without the authority's approval.

Blocked

Dobson recommended that the authority delegate the required powers to him. Authority members voted not to accept the commissioner's recommendation, meaning that the mayor's cuts are blocked.

FBU regional secretary for London Paul Embery applauded the authority members' stance. "Hostility to the mayor's planned cuts is growing by the day," he said. "The fire authority, the workforce, the public, the Greater London Assembly and even some Conservative councils have all expressed opposition to the cuts." They would mean 4.7 million Londoners in 20 boroughs waiting longer for a fire engine. That was "dangerous and wrong".

Embery said it was time the mayor grasped the nettle and abandoned his reckless plans. The FBU held rallies outside the fire authority meetings. On 21 January, 500 firefighters and members of the public heard speakers from the FBU and other unions.

Arrogant

However, the mayor has threatened to go to court to force the cuts through. "Boris Johnson's intervention is deplorable," said Embery. "It is arrogant in the extreme for the mayor to think he knows better than his own fire authority."

"The mayor's unprecedented move raises all sorts of questions about democracy and accountability. He should listen to his fire authority; he should listen to the workforce, and he should listen to Londoners, the vast majority of whom oppose these cuts. We will campaign vigorously to defend London's fire service."



STEFANO CAGNONI

*Sally Brett:
Government
review is rushed,
premature and
lacks objectivity*

PICTURE: JESS HURD/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK



www.fbu.org.uk

Cuts 'kick in teeth' for firefighters and public

Devon and Somerset

The Fire Brigades Union in Devon and Somerset is urging the public to protest against the worst cuts ever planned to their local fire and rescue service.

The government has reduced its grant to Devon and Somerset FRS by more than 10% from April this year and over 7% for the following year.

This means cuts three times greater than any

imposed on the service before and gives the lie to claims that the fire and rescue service is being protected.

The fire authority and senior managers have put forward proposals for public consultation, including cuts that would see fire appliances removed from local communities.

FBU brigade chair Bob Walker said if the cuts proposed went through there would be

fewer firefighters, fewer fire stations and fewer fire engines.

"After the recent floods and fires firefighters have dealt with so professionally, the cuts would be a real kick in the teeth for both the public and the service," he said.

"The FBU is asking people in our communities to stand up against damaging proposals for the fire and rescue service before it is too late."



Cambridgeshire firefighters campaign against cuts

Threat to rural population

Cambridgeshire

Firefighters in Cambridgeshire are furious at plans to downgrade fire cover in the county. They include the closure of Swaffham Bullbeck station and the downgrading of a vital rescue vehicle to day-time cover only.

The FBU called the plans disgraceful and pledged to mount a vigorous campaign of opposition if councillors agree to pursue them.

Cambridgeshire FBU secretary Cameron Matthews said: "These cuts will seriously affect emergency cover in Cambridgeshire

and we believe will compromise both public and firefighter safety.

"Swaffham Bullbeck station provides cover in a rural, isolated area and the public there rely on it to protect them in case of emergency. Shutting the station would increase response times in the area. The rescue vehicle at Huntingdon fire station is an essential resource which provides specialist back-up and support at road traffic collisions, flooding and other emergencies.

"It is a vital emergency vehicle, which is used in the most dangerous and difficult instances, and the plans to downgrade to day-cover only are disgraceful."

SOUNDING OFF

We must defend the public sector equality duty

TUC senior equality policy officer Sally Brett says the government is attacking a key equality measure

The Equality Act 2010 obliges all public authorities to have "due regard" to equality in all that they do. When this duty is properly implemented it should lead to more efficient and effective public services, better serving those most in need; services tailored to a diverse population; and provide more equal employment opportunities in the public sector.

But ministers seem to think that consideration of equality will happen routinely without any statutory obligation. David Cameron told the CBI: "We have smart people in Whitehall who consider equalities issues while they're making the policy. We don't need all this extra tick-box stuff."

Brandon Lewis, the secretary of state for local government, wrote to leaders of local authorities telling them to stop equality impact assessments and monitoring. Communities secretary Eric Pickles has described monitoring as a waste of taxpayers' money.

After the government announced it is going to review the duty the TUC wrote to ministers arguing that the review is premature, rushed and lacking in objectivity. Neither is it clear how those representing public service workers and users will be engaged.

The public sector equality duty has not always been properly complied with, but it has made a positive difference in many public authorities – providing unions and others with an important statutory basis from which they can fight for the voices of the most vulnerable to be heard.

Without it, or with a weaker version of it, this will become ever-harder in an already difficult climate. We need to defend what we have and call for improvements in compliance and enforcement mechanisms.



A TUC briefing on the equality duty and the review is at <http://tinyurl.com/bd6m3dn>

Contracting out plans will cost lives – FBU

Privatisation

The FBU has told fire minister Brandon Lewis that his plans to privatise the whole of Britain's fire and rescue service will cost lives.

The minister wrote to the Regulatory Reform Committee at Westminster seeking its views on new laws to "enable fire and rescue authorities in England to contract out their full range of services to a suitable provider".

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "Just privatising parts of the service has already brought near-disaster. AssetCo, which was given the contract to maintain London's and Lincolnshire's fleets of fire engines, failed to do so properly and, when the company collapsed, could have lost them altogether to AssetCo's creditors.

"These proposals are grotesque and if

they come to fruition will sacrifice lives on the altar of profit. This is the same disastrous model that has been used in the health service, the rail industry and local government to slash services while providing bountiful profits for private companies," Wrack said.

"This is not an employee-led local initiative. It's simply a cost-cutting measure. Firefighters in Cleveland and elsewhere have told the FBU they do not want privatisation, they do not want mutualisation and they do not want contracting out. They want to provide a first-class service to the public and have professional pay and conditions of service.

"There is no public demand for privatising the fire and rescue service. There is no support among firefighters for these measures. The government should stop now before they do untold damage."

Inquest raises concern over risk assessments

Lakanal House

The inquest into the south London Lakanal House fire that killed six people and hospitalised 17 more has begun and continued as we went to press.

The fire in a Camberwell tower block on 3 July 2009 started with a faulty TV set and spread across several floors and along corridors, trapping many of the 84 families living there.

A police-led investigation into the fire found that work on the building had destroyed its compartment protection. Firewalls designed to stop smoke and flames from spreading had been cut to allow pipes and duct work, while ceiling and floor spaces lacked protection measures and vital flameproof materials had been removed.

Despite promises about the inspection of tower blocks, there are serious questions about the competence of private



Six people died in the fire at Lakanal House

providers carrying out risk assessments. The law makes landlords responsible for risk assessments, but these are supposed to be checked by the fire and rescue service.

FBU fire safety adviser Dave Sibert said: "The

quality of too many fire-risk assessments remains poor. Too often they are carried out by people who lack appropriate knowledge. To do it properly it is necessary to get into the hidden parts of a building, behind walls and into ceiling spaces."

IN BRIEF

Firefighters raise ambulance concerns

The FBU has added its voice to growing concern about delays in ambulance crews attending emergencies in East Anglia.

Keith Handscomb, East Anglia FBU executive council member, said: "We applaud the skills and commitment of the professional paramedics and ambulance crews we work alongside, but fire crews are telling us something is going seriously wrong with the 999 response of the East of England Ambulance Service.

"Fire crews tell us they and casualties are waiting longer and longer for the arrival of paramedics and ambulances. When a paramedic does arrive they are often on their own in a car or on a motorbike and are unable to take seriously injured casualties to hospital.

"The FBU has received reports of the service sending a private ambulance to a road traffic accident without either of the crew apparently having the professional medical skills needed to deal with the emergency."

'Blue light' merger plans opposed

The FBU is extremely concerned at reports suggesting a possible merger of the fire and rescue service and the police in Northamptonshire

Steve Mason, FBU brigade secretary of Northamptonshire, said: "We strongly believe that each of the emergency services are completely unique in the way that they need to work.

"It is obvious that secret talks have been going on for some time. A merger would be driven by cuts and is bad news for the public.

"A forced merger, carried out with no consultation, is not in the best interests of the communities we serve or the firefighters we represent."

FBU MEMBER BENEFITS

Home insurance

Motor insurance

Travel insurance

Call UIA Insurance on
0845 842 8421

(Calls charged at local rate)
www.fbuinsurance.co.uk





Scottish firefighters rally in Kirkcaldy to demand pensions justice

Single fire and rescue service for Scotland

Roddy Robertson, FBU executive council member for Scotland, explains major changes to the service there which begin next month

Scotland

On 1 April a new single Scottish fire and rescue service will evolve.

Why? Public services in Scotland have not been immune from the cuts that are being imposed by the Westminster government. It was recognised by all political parties except the Liberal Democrats that a single service is the best option to maintain the frontline service in the face of these cuts.

Over the last few years both the fire and rescue service and the police have consulted on the options – a new Police and Fire Reform Act, a transitional framework and the appointment of the board that will govern the new service.

The FBU has been fully involved in trying to influence these discussions, to ensure that we can protect as many of our members' jobs as possible as well as their conditions. We know they go hand in hand with a professional service for the public. From April, the fire and rescue service in Scotland will no longer be controlled by local government but will be a non-departmental public body.

Governance

Non-departmental public bodies in Scotland are organisations funded directly by the Scottish government. They include executive and advisory bodies (quangos), tribunals and nationalised industries. Staff of these organisations are not civil servants. The Scottish government appoints the boards that run them. The fire and rescue service will come under community safety and sits within the justice portfolio.

'Day 1' issues

Discussions with the new management team have highlighted a number of "Day 1"

issues and other topics that can be worked through after the new service starts. These include continuing professional development, additional responsibility allowances, pay frequency, flexi-duty and the retained duty system. Nothing will change on Day 1 and consultation will be through branch meetings and the union's reporting structures.

Members are encouraged to attend branch meetings, to ensure they have a rep and that someone is passing the branch views to the appropriate committee and also receiving the most up-to-date facts on all matters. A book could be filled with the rumours and half-truths that are circulating.

Elected brigade officials have been working for some time to propose a draft FBU structure to reflect the new shape of the service. An interim structure will be put in place to allow the region to function ahead of a formal agreement, with the required rule changes.

Members can keep up to date by visiting the website www.fbusscotland.org



Fighting to save the NHS

JILL MOUNTFORD, Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign organising committee

The local demonstration to save Lewisham Hospital in south London on 26 January was far bigger than many national demonstrations. Some 25,000 people marched to protest against the closure of the accident and emergency, maternity and emergency surgery services – even more than marched on the last mass

demonstration at the end of November.

At six hours' notice, 500 people protested outside Lewisham Hospital on 31 January against health secretary Jeremy Hunt's announcement of devastating cuts and closures. Hunt proposed big cuts across the NHS in south London, a major downgrading of Lewisham Hospital A&E

to make it little more than an urgent care unit, and closure of the maternity unit.

After the massive campaign in Lewisham the A&E got a formal, partial reprieve. But it is not a victory, not yet.

This is a test case – both for the Tories, in their drive to lay waste to the NHS, and for campaigns to defend the health service.

VIEW
FROM THE
AERIAL LADDER
PLATFORM



(personal capacity)

The Save Lewisham A&E campaign has had a huge impact and will step up the fight. We will not just rely on the outcome of legal challenges by the council. We will continue with a high-profile community campaign of demonstrations, stunts and public activity to keep up the pressure.

We will be putting forward clear

demands about the solution. The government should write off private finance initiative (PFI) debt, return all assets to full public ownership and replace PFI with direct public funding. The campaign needs to strengthen links to other anti-cuts/closure campaigns, such as the fire station campaigns.

We will also help the workers at Lewisham Hospital become more confident and organised, so they can begin to discuss and experiment about the kind of action necessary to prevent the closure, such as refusing to run down services and work-ins.

More information:

www.savelewishamhospital.com

The 'best case' scenario is a fantasy

The review of normal pension age (NPA) for firefighters published by the Westminster government does not make the case for firefighters working until 60. The FBU believes instead that it includes evidence that firefighters should not be made to work beyond 55.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "FBU officials attended the review as the sole representatives of employees. The union submitted evidence to the review and discussed the research with the review chair, Dr Tony Williams. But members should recognise that this report does not represent our opinions and the FBU has not endorsed the recommendations.

"We believe that the review does acknowledge the arguments the union has made. The FBU will be discussing it with ministers and civil servants."

Key findings

The most significant points in the Williams report are:

- It does not recommend a normal pension age of 60 for the firefighters' scheme planned from 2015.
- An NPA of 60 for the majority of the current workforce, whatever scheme they are in, means large numbers would face dismissal on the grounds of capability. (9.1.3 page 123).

The report argues that the only way such a change in NPA could be achieved is if certain conditions are met in relation to entry standards; improved monitoring of fitness levels and health; improved arrangements for fitness training and monitoring; and a range of other measures (12.9 page 146).

Despite this being a government-commissioned review, it does not support the current government proposals in relation to firefighters' normal pension age of 60.

Worst case

The report is mostly about fitness rather than pensions. It states that a fitness level of at least 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ VO₂max is necessary given the nature of firefighting. The report provides medical evidence that working beyond 55 is not attainable by most current firefighters. Between half and two-thirds of current firefighters would not be fit enough

to work beyond 55. Elsewhere, the report suggests more than four out of five firefighters would not make it to the proposed NPA.

The report suggests that, even with higher entry standards, if 42 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹ is the required fitness level, then as a worst-case scenario, at 55 years of age, approximately 85% of firefighters would be below the minimum standard required for operational duty. By 60 years, this percentage would increase to 92% (4.4.4 page 49).

The report claims, on the basis of just four out of 57 fire and rescue services, that the current VO₂max of firefighters is 46 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹, but with wide variation for fitness, age and gender between 38 and 54 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹. It admits that at 55-60 years 66% of firefighters were below this standard (4.4.5 page 50).

Protection

Around half of all existing firefighters are partially or totally protected from the proposed changes to the pension scheme. Firefighters within 10 years of the end of their career can retire as planned, while those with more than ten years but less than 14 to go receive tapered protection. However that still leaves around 9,000 members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS), 4,600 wholtime members of the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS) and 5,000 retained members of the NFPS without any protection.

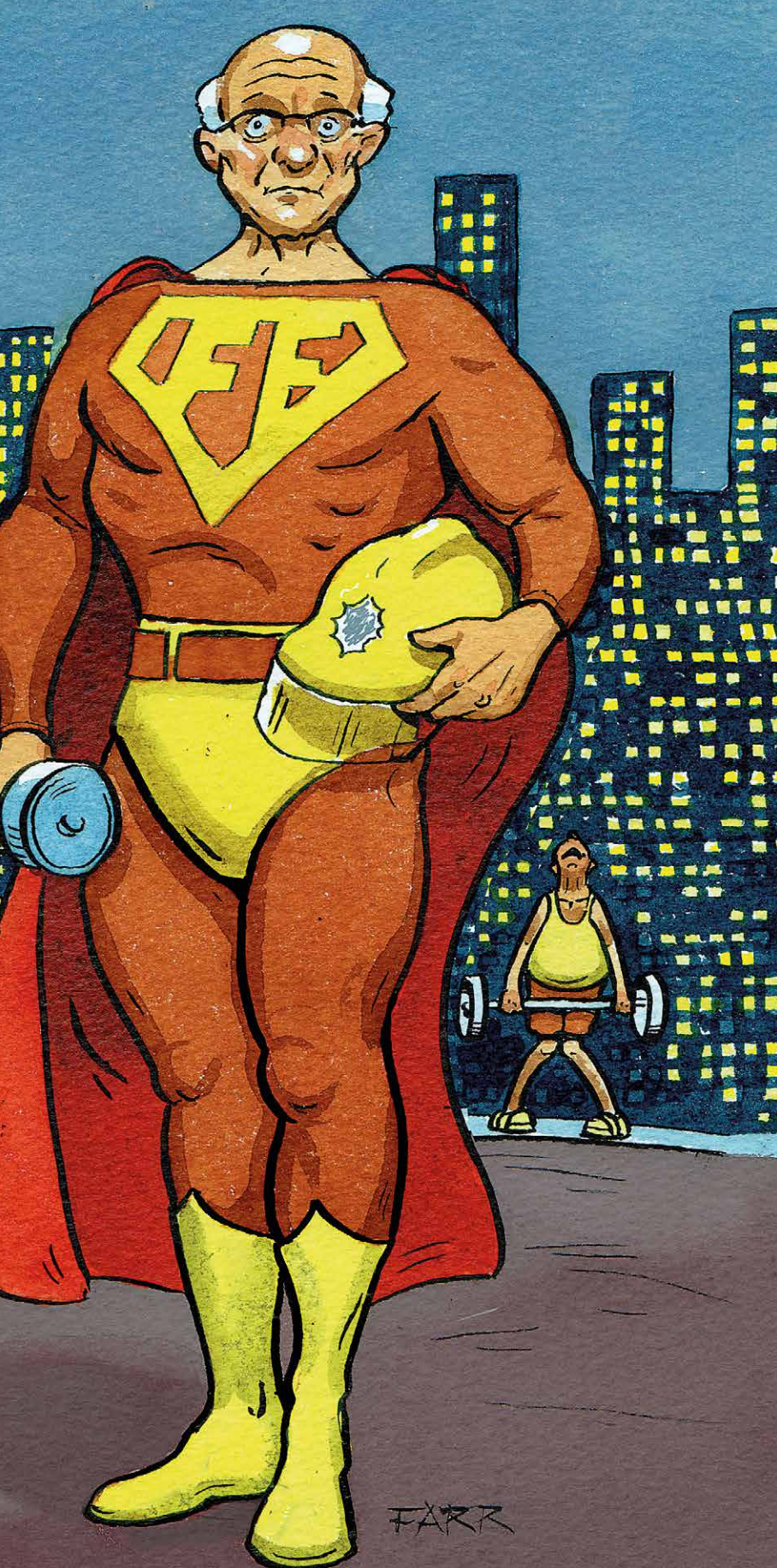
The Williams report recommends that the government look at further protection for firefighters who have little or no chance of being fit enough to work to 60.

It states: "Allowing firefighters to leave after age 55 on a pension that is actuarially reduced from age 60 without any additional penalty could be considered a reasonable way to manage expectations, and to manage any potential discriminatory issues." (12.8.4 p.145).

Matt Wrack said: "Although the FBU intends to challenge aspects of the review and its findings, it does give a pretty clear indication that an NPA of 60 is unworkable, unrealistic and does not take account of the job. The FBU will continue to raise our points in an attempt to get a sensible and workable solution."



BE SUPER-FIT OR



REPORT'S 'BEST CASE SCENARIO' IS JUST A FANTASY

The report suggests that even in a 'best case' scenario, in which firefighters maintain their physical activity status, body mass index and smoking status as they age, at 55 years of age approximately 15% of firefighters would be below the minimum standard required for operational duty. By 60 years, this percentage would have increased to 23% (4.4.4 page 49).

But the 'best case' model uses a higher entry standard than is current practice. It assumes firefighters are recruited at 47 mL·kg⁻¹·min⁻¹, whereas actually the recruitment standard is much lower.

This means the 'best case' scenario is a fantasy, as it assumes a much higher fitness level on recruitment than is, in fact the case.

Both scenarios use a starting point higher than the current national firefighter selection tests. In addition, the report does not spell out clearly what kind of fitness regime and lifestyle changes would be necessary for its 'best case' scenario.

Most firefighters already do fitness training at work of at least 30 minutes per shift. The report's recommendation of 2.5 hours a week does not seem sufficient to improve fitness of most existing firefighters.

Matt Wrack said: "This model is not based on current standards, current fitness regimes or on the current workforce."

The Williams report and FBU pension bulletins can be downloaded from www.fbu.org.uk



SACKED

New report backs FBU arguments about when firefighters should retire

Unfair and unworkable

How government plans for big increases in contributions could cause firefighter pension schemes to implode

The government will shortly announce its increases to firefighters' pension contributions and, if it sticks to its proposals, it will take a hefty whack from firefighters' pay packets.

The Fire Brigades Union believes that the proposals are unacceptable and that the government has ignored its own review into these increases. From April 2013 the government is likely to impose increases starting at 1.3% for Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) members and 0.8% for New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (NFPS) members. The increases by role are shown in the tables (right).

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The FBU does not accept that these contribution increases are justified. We know that they are a deficit reduction measure. Not one penny will go towards improving firefighters' pensions.

"We still fear that a significant number of firefighters will decide to opt out – particularly if the further increases threatened for next year are implemented. This is not only evidenced by the union's submissions. The government's own reviews identify this.

"The FBU will continue to press the argument that these increases are unfair to firefighters and unworkable for public finances. Last year the government at least partially acknowledged our evidence. But this time it appears to be ignoring the same arguments which are not only evidenced by their own reviews but are also the views of the professionals."

Contributions review

Last year the FBU produced compelling evidence, based on an extensive YouGov survey of members, that the proposed increases to firefighters' pension contributions were not only unjust for firefighters, but would not generate the revenue the government thought they would because of opt-outs and new firefighters not joining.

The government's response was to launch a review of potential opt-outs and to halve the increases it had originally planned for April 2012. No other sector received this concession – although the FBU still argued that any increase was unacceptable.

For the review the FBU carried out another survey of members and submitted new evidence to confirm its argument that there is already a downward trend in participation in the pension schemes. The union also examined evidence from the government's own research and other work done in Scotland, which also supported the union's position.

FBU survey

The FBU's view is further supported by new evidence in the 2012 YouGov survey of firefighters. It found that more than half (54%) of respondents said they would be likely or very likely to opt out

GOING UP
Monthly contributions for firefighters

GOING DOWN?

Number of members in pension schemes

supported by the report

The views of firefighters in Scotland about their pension scheme carried out for the Scottish government. Based on responses from 400 firefighters of all roles, it showed that:

- For an increase of 1% in employee contributions, 39% of members would be likely or very likely to opt out.
- If this increase is 2%, 69% are likely or very likely to opt out.
- At 3% and 4%, over 80% said they were likely or very likely to opt out.

The Scottish questionnaire reinforced the findings of face-to-face forums elsewhere in the UK. It concluded: "While none of the 400 firefighters who responded have yet opted out of their pension scheme, the majority stated that

they have considered doing so."

Where now on pensions?

The FBU has told the government that its protection measures for lower paid workers on £21,000 or less simply do not help firefighters.

The union also highlighted the impact of tiered increases on officer members, who could face huge bills, as well as anomalies for London members and others who have received allowances which count as pensionable pay and push some firefighters into higher tiers.

But the indications from government so far are that it will impose the full increase from April 2013 and a further increase in April 2014.

Matt Wrack said: "The pension battle is far from over. There is still much for the union to do to protect our members' pensions. This is not over by a long way. What members can guarantee is that this union is working as hard as we can to defend the pensions firefighters have earned through our irreplaceable work."

if the proposal to increase the employee contribution was implemented. Over a quarter (27%) said they would very likely opt out if contributions are raised.

With opt-outs on that sort of scale, the government would actually lose revenue and the pension scheme would be in danger of imploding. The FBU submission to the government's consultation insisted that it think again before such a self-defeating increase.

Research Works report

The Department for Communities and Local Government, which is responsible for the fire and rescue service in England, commissioned the Research Works organisation to investigate concerns about contribution increases. It asked firefighters across the UK for their views on proposed increases.

Comments included:

- "Many are waiting for the union to make a definitive statement about current negotiations. Consequently most are adopting a 'wait and see' position."
- "Paying more and getting less is going to be the most important factor in determining my decision."
- "None had ever considered opting out until now. All, however were thinking about opting out at the moment."

The FBU's views were further

Table 1 FPS, proposed firefighter contribution increases 2013-14

	Contribution rate 2012-13 (%)	Contribution rate 2013-14 (%)	Total extra annual contributions April 2013 - March 2014 (£)	Additional cost per month April 2013 - March 2014 (£)
Wholetime firefighter	11.6	12.9	370	31
Wholetime crew manager	11.7	13.2	474	39
Wholetime watch manager	11.7	13.2	530	44
Wholetime station manager	11.8	13.5	689	57
Wholetime group manager	11.8	13.5	797	66
Wholetime area manager	11.9	13.7	981	82

Table 2 NFPS, proposed firefighter contribution increases 2013-14

	Contribution rate 2012-13 (%)	Contribution rate 2013-14 (%)	Total extra annual contributions April 2013 - March 2014 (£)	Additional cost per month April 2013 - March 2014 (£)
Retained firefighter (full retainer)	8.8	9.6	23	1
Retained firefighter (£10,000 pensionable pay)	8.8	9.6	80	7
Wholetime development firefighter	8.8	9.6	178	15
Wholetime firefighter	8.8	9.6	228	19
Wholetime crew manager	8.9	9.9	316	26
Wholetime watch manager	8.9	9.9	353	29

Figures are rounded and do not include tax relief. Some firefighters pay more because of London weighting and other allowances.



OUR DUTY OF CANDOUR

Speak out against cuts

The latest central government funding cuts are a big blow to the fire and rescue service

The Fire Brigades Union is alarmed by the latest fire and rescue service central funding figures from the Westminster government and is demanding action to defend the very fabric of the service.

On 4 February the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published its final local government settlement, providing figures for the central grant allocated metropolitan and combined fire authorities in England.

Figures for county fire authorities (and London) in England, and for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland were not made available.

Every metropolitan and combined authority faces a cut in its revenue spending power (made up of the central grant and council tax contribution).

Table 1 Revenue spending power

CUT	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
%	-2.2	-0.5	-4.7	-3.3

Note: Figures adjusted by DCLG between two settlements

Next year has planned cuts twice as bad as those in 2011-12. Overall cuts would be over 10% over the four years.

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The professionals in the fire and rescue service have to speak out against these cuts. We have a 'duty of candour' to the communities we serve and as the representative body for firefighters to tell the truth: Cuts cost lives.

"Although some chief fire officers lobbied about their own brigades, only the FBU has spoken up for the fire and rescue service as a whole. Everyone connected with the service and everyone who cares about the service has a moral obligation to challenge the government's plans.

"Cuts mean fewer firefighters, fewer fire engines and fewer fire stations. Slower response times mean the public is at greater risk of death or serious injury. It really is as simple as that."

All fire authorities hit hard

One feature that stands out is the way both combined and metropolitan fire authorities have been hit.



PICTURES: STEFANO CAGNONI

Table 2 Revenue spending power

	2013-14	2014-15
Metropolitan %	-5.2	-4.1
Combined %	-4.4	-2.9

In the last settlement (2010), the metropolitan fire authorities were hit twice as hard as those in combined fire authorities. This time the hit is still greater for the metropolitan authorities, but not by as much.

The metropolitan hit is even harder when overall fire authority income is considered. Fire authority income comes mainly from central government grants and from council tax. The balance between the two varies in each fire and rescue service. But the central grant tends to be highest in metropolitan brigades – as much as two-thirds from DCLG. But in some authorities, around one-third comes from the central grant.

However there is not a straightforward rural/urban split, with some fire authorities with large rural areas suffering the same level of cuts as the metropolitans, while some more urban fire services received smaller cuts.

Formula grant

The Westminster government has made it difficult to compare this settlement with the last. But with council tax effectively frozen, it is the reduction in central formula grant that is the root cause of the cuts. The revenue spending power figures have been 'adjusted' for 2012-13.

The formula grant figures are not published in the same format as previously. The formula grant figure for 2013-14,

together with the published figures in the last settlement, indicate the scale of cuts over three years.

Table 3 Central formula grant

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
%	-6.7%	-1.0%	-8.7%

Cuts over three years are 16.4% from central grant.

Frontline cuts

Matt Wrack said: "Services are already being cut to the bone. Frontline services are already under attack. Fire engines are being removed from stations, response times are slowing. When your house is on fire, every second counts. The cuts are already biting – yet more are threatened."

"Sir Ken Knight's government-inspired review must not be used to cloak further frontline cut-backs. You can't run a fleet of fire engines on shared costs and back office savings. As fire-fighting professionals, it's our job to raise the alarm and alert the public to what's going on before it's too late."

The FBU believes these cuts will wreck the fire and rescue service. They are not being made on the basis of needs or risk. They have been decided arbitrarily to meet the government's deficit. The cuts will put the public and firefighters at risk. That's why the FBU will oppose cuts, with all industrial and political means available.

The figures are on the government website
www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/1314/settle.htm



SAVE OUR FIRE SERVICE

FIRE BRIGADES UNION • WWW.FBU.ORG.UK

ASBESTOS

Get your name on the database

Members do not have to have been diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease to register with the FBU

Asbestos

Substantial compensation has been recovered with the support of the FBU and its lawyers Thompsons for the family of a member who died tragically young at 56 from the asbestos-related cancer peritoneal mesothelioma.

Andrew Grant, who was employed as a firefighter by Fife fire and rescue service between 1978 and 2008, was diagnosed with the disease, which attacks the lining of the abdomen, in 2007. He first suffered abdominal pains and then underwent months of tests.

He had attended many fires in factories, power stations, warehouses, houses, farms and barns.

Aftermath of fires

In the aftermath of fires, he was regularly required to remove and disturb

asbestos lagging that was used to insulate steam and water pipes, boilers and other equipment. He also had to disturb asbestos lagging which was used as insulation on electric cables and to use a ceiling hook to pull down asbestos ceilings and petition walls which were close to collapse.

The air became thick with asbestos dust and his tunics were covered in it.

He was never warned about the dangers of asbestos exposure or provided with protective breathing equipment, even though Fife council would have been well



Andrew Grant: Family hopes his case will help others

aware of the dangers.

Andrew Grant died on 1 April 2008 after a distressing battle with the disease. He was so concerned that friends and colleagues may also have been exposed to asbestos that he wanted to raise awareness of his condition to help prevent others becoming ill in the future.

He urged his wife Margaret and daughter Angela to contact the FBU for advice and the union instructed Thompsons to pursue a claim for compensation on the family's behalf. Although Fife council denied liability for his condition, it eventually agreed to settle out of court for £400,000.

Angela said: "My dad was a fit and active man before he became ill. We were all devastated and distressed at his diagnosis. It is shocking that so long after the perils of asbestos exposure were well known that an employer could continue to expose its workers and offer them no protection.

"Our family has suffered and

lost so much due to his entirely preventable death and although no amount of money will ever bring a beloved husband, brother, dad and grandad back, our family does hope that this case will help others to receive help and support if they ever have to go through this."

Asbestos register

The FBU runs an asbestos register – a record of members who believe they were exposed to the lethal dust while working for the fire service.

The register is an invaluable database of information that can help to speed up

Your details

To enter your details on the register, phone and ask for a form or go to:

www.fbu.org.uk/forms/asbestos_survey.php

the process of compensation claims for members who become ill due to asbestos exposure. It records the names of members, employers, the workplaces where they came into contact with asbestos and the relevant dates.

By holding this type of information on a database the union and its solicitors can easily search for those who may have been exposed during the key period when asbestos was present both in buildings and in protective equipment such as blankets, anti-flash hoods and gloves.

Members do not have to have been diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease to register with the FBU asbestos register. Nor do they need to have absolute proof that they were exposed.

It is important that the FBU has as many names as possible on the register to help those that are already ill or become ill in the future and need to make a claim.

Get in touch

Any member diagnosed with an asbestos-related disease should contact the union legal service on 0808 100 6061 (England and Wales) 0800 0891 331 (Scotland)



Legal Beagle

Liability, debt and duty



Q My marriage broke down and shortly after I left the marital home and subsequently got divorced. The house was repossessed more than two years later but, as I had not removed my name from the mortgage, I became liable for the debt. My ex declared bankruptcy so the mortgage company made no claim against him. Am I now solely liable for the whole amount? Also, if I remarry, would there be a claim on my partner's savings etc?

A If the original mortgage was in joint names then both parties were 'jointly and severally liable' for that mortgage. Each person is liable for the entire amount of the debt, not just a portion, regardless of what they may have agreed with each other. This means that the creditor may demand repayment of the total amount from any of the liable people.

When the house was sold, if the property was in negative equity then the proceeds from the sale would not be enough to cover the outstanding mortgage. The sale proceeds would pay off most of the outstanding mortgage but anything left over would now be deemed to be an unsecured debt, it is no longer secured against the property. The liability of this is still the same, both parties still have liability.

If one party is then declared bankrupt, the creditor can no longer pursue that party for this debt. This has the effect of making the other party on the



SATOSHI KAMBAYASHI

agreement solely liable for the outstanding debt.

The creditor can only pursue the party named on the debt. So if this party were to remarry the creditor cannot go after the married partner. Liability stays with the person named on the agreement.

If there are concerns about debt, specialist advice should be sought. If a solicitor is used, agree fees and terms.

Q What are the rules that determine how a fire authority governs and fulfils its responsibilities?

A The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the main duties and powers of fire authorities.

Under the Act, a fire authority has a number of primary duties:

- To provide a fire service and to ensure its efficiency
- To provide efficient training of members of the service
- To ensure that efficient mobilising and communications arrangements exist
- To obtain information needed for firefighting purposes
- To ensure that the steps are taken to mitigate damage to property through firefighting
- To provide fire safety advice
- To give mutual assistance to other fire services
- To ensure that adequate water supplies are available for firefighting purposes.

Other core functions include:

- Fire safety – promoting fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on steps to be taken to prevent fires and the giving of advice on how to prevent fires and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire.
- Firefighting – extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires.
- Road traffic accidents – rescuing people in the event of road traffic accidents and protecting people from serious harm in the event of road traffic accidents.
- Emergencies – when necessary dealing with non-fire emergencies, such as road traffic accidents.
- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 is available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents

Fire and rescue services also have responsibilities under:

● The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

This requires FRs to assess, plan and advise on the risk of emergencies taking place in their areas of control. The Act is available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/contents

● The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

Where FRs may have powers delegated to them by fire inspectors. The order is available at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made



Hurricane Sandy devastated huge areas of the east coast of the USA



Tunnel 2 Towers – real international solidarity

‘We had dinner in community halls, sitting down and sharing a meal with people whose homes had been devastated’

London firefighter Steve James explains how UK firefighters helped with the Hurricane Sandy clean-up in the United States

Solidarity

Deep bonds forged between UK and US firefighters in the wake of 9/11 took a new, highly practical turn late last year after Hurricane Sandy blew into New York, unleashing massive tidal waves.

A group of UK firefighters were extremely keen to help with the clean-up. As news of the devastation broke, London firefighter Steve James had an immediate gut response to “reach out to colleagues across the pond”.

Steve is used to organising things. Just before Hurricane Sandy struck, he had organised a Tunnel 2 Towers run in London, modelled on events held in New York and other cities to commemorate firefighters who died in the line of duty on 9/11.

Heroism

On that day in 2001, 343 firefighters lost their lives. They included Stephen Siller, who has come to symbolise selfless heroism among emergency service workers, and whose actions are immortalised in the Tunnel to Towers runs around the world. There is even one in Kabul.

Siller, who had five young children, had just

clocked off the night shift at Brooklyn fire station when he learned of the twin towers attack.

He found that the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, which led to the burning towers, was blocked to vehicles. But, determined to help, he strapped on heavy equipment and ran through the tunnel to help. He died when the south tower collapsed. A charity foundation set up to honour his name has so far raised over £10m.

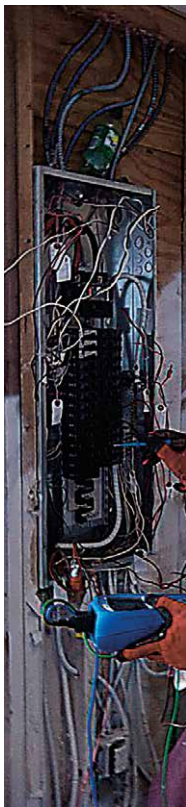
Pride and tears

Steve James admits to being moved and motivated by Stephen’s story – YouTube has many clips, including Oprah Winfrey alongside Siller’s young family, who brim with pride and tears as their father’s fellow firefighters stand to honour him.

When Hurricane Sandy struck, Steve had already met many New York firefighters – some ran in the London race. Strong friendships had been forged. This time round, Fire Department of New York (FDNY) firefighters were dealing with a natural disaster, not a terrorist attack. But it was still a gruelling call: some firefighters found their own homes uninhabitable as the tidal wave crashed through coastal properties.

Steve was joined by six UK firefighters on

‘We were stripping walls, taking floors up. We even did some wiring’





what turned out to be a heady nine-day volunteering blitz.

But they could not just board a plane and head for New York. The American embassy helped sort out permits, American Airways stumped up cut-priced fares, took all equipment for free and gave the firefighters plenty of space to sleep on the journey. Yorkshire Tea furnished crucial supplies in a nifty piece of product placement.

Like a second wind

Six weeks after Hurricane Sandy first hit, the team arrived in New York. But they were certainly not too late as there was still much to be done. "We were like a second wind," says Steve. "FDNY firefighters had been working in shifts. Some hadn't even got a home to go to anymore."

Team UK was taken to damaged houses that could be cleaned up. "We were stripping walls, taking floors up. We even did some wiring," says Steve. "We had dinner in community halls, sitting down and sharing a meal with people whose homes had been devastated. As it was coming up to Christmas, there were kids who had Christmas stockings pinned up in the hall. They couldn't do that at home. It was all quite emotional."

Volunteering shifts for the UK team could be more than 12 hours long. They heard harrowing stories of people who died, trapped in their homes, after the hurricane hit. A policeman was found clutching the son he went to rescue from the family home's basement. As he went in, the waters rose behind a closed bedroom door. Both father and son drowned.

But, amid the grief and loss, the Brits found fighting spirit, camaraderie, generosity and a sense of some sort of order being restored, as people banded together and homes were again made habitable.

One firefighter, Todd Billgore, played American football for the FDNY team that lost more players in 9/11 than any other team in any disaster.

Amid the grief and loss, the Brits found fighting spirit, camaraderie, generosity and a sense of some sort of order being restored, as people banded together and homes were again made habitable

For two months Todd "had been going round to everybody else's houses helping. He hadn't got round to doing his own," says Steve. "He had gone back to living with his mum and dad."

So Steve and his UK colleagues decided to get working with the FDNY American football team and personnel from the local firehouse. They went round one Sunday morning and gutted the house in a day. "We must have filled 12 rubbish trucks. None of us wanted to stop. We got it done in a day. Todd bought us all pizzas and said it would have taken him a month. It felt like a day well spent."

Celebrity

There was more than a smattering of celebrity around in the Big Clean Up. The Boston Red Sox baseball team even came over to help restore houses.

Team UK left exhausted yet satisfied that they had helped their US colleagues get things sorted.

There will be another Tunnel 2 Towers run in London on 21 July to raise money for British charities including those that benefit UK firefighters when times are hard or misfortune strikes. Expect a few New York firefighters to be there.

More information:
www.tunnel2towersrun.org
Info@tunnel2towersrun.org
 01722 332211

Prize quiz



Win a Vango Omega 350 tent

To win a Vango Omega 350 tent please send your answers by 31 March 2013 on a postcard to: Prize Competition (March 2013) FBU Head Office, Bradley House, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 7AE. Please include your name, address and membership number. The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries.

1 Lewis Hamilton has signed up to which Formula 1 race team?

- A – Mercedes
- B – Red Bull
- C – Toro Rosso
- D – McLaren

2 Where will the 2013 Open golf championship be played?

- A – Muirfield
- B – Royal Troon
- C – Royal Birkdale
- D – St Andrews



4 Who became famous as Muhammad Ali's cornerman throughout his heavyweight boxing career?

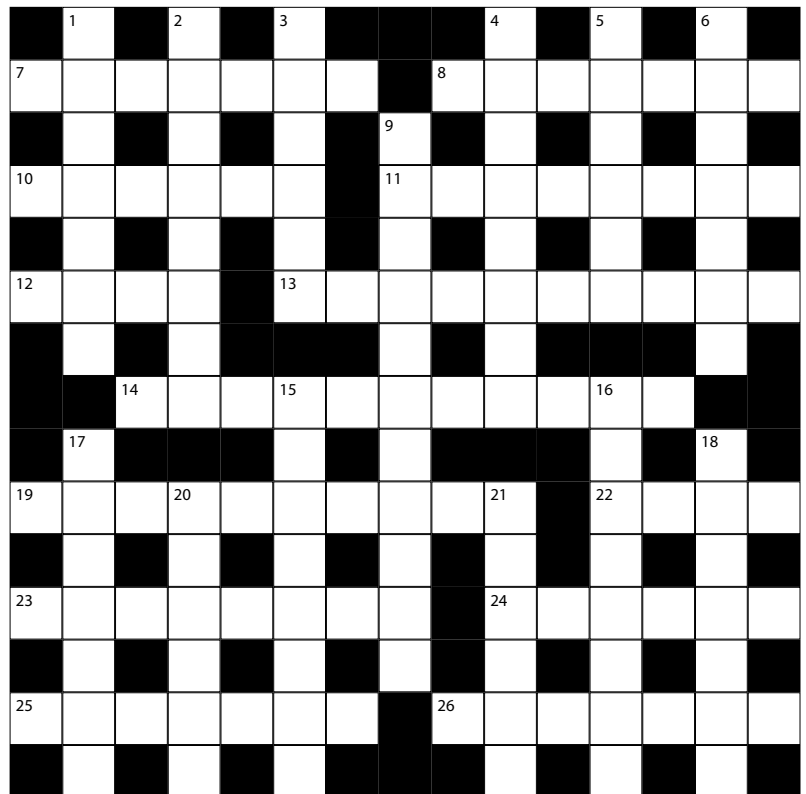
- A – Al Gavin
- B – Don King
- C – Angelo Dundee
- D – Cus D'Amato

3 In 2013 the 100th Tour de France will visit which French metropolitan department for the first time?

- A – Andorra
- B – Corsica
- C – Sardegna
- D – La Réunion

5 Which NFL team has signed to play a regular season game at Wembley for the next four years, starting in 2013?

- A – Jacksonville Jaguars
- B – Pittsburgh Steelers
- C – New York Giants
- D – Green Bay Packers



CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 7** Young hare (7)
- 8** Cone-bearing seed plants, including pines, cedars, spruces etc (7)
- 10** Long narrow channel – cut into vinyl? (6)
- 11** Cold confection (3-5)
- 12** More than just a house (4)
- 13** One who saw it happen (3-7)
- 14** Form of words creating a picture of something (11)
- 19** Didn't dodge the camera, but tried to dodge the points (5,5)
- 22** Patch of ground – in which to be buried? (4)
- 23** Jam, for example (8)
- 24** Set alight (6)
- 25** Usually opposite the floor (7)
- 26** Boris, who wants to close London fire stations (7)

DOWN

- 1** Taxed if you're on benefits, but not if you own a mansion (7)
- 2** Paraffin, on the other side of the pond (8)
- 3** Erase (6)
- 4** One such as Gore Vidal, Hilary Mantel etc (8)
- 5** Lemon, across the channel (6)
- 6** Regress, into illness, for example (7)
- 9** You! (4-7)
- 15** Understandable (8)
- 16** Adversary, rival, competitor etc (8)
- 17** Blackened by fire (7)
- 18** Command – victim of expensive botched reform (7)
- 20** Treat with offensive rudeness (6)
- 21** Publication's chief (6)

Last month's answers and winners



Crossword solution January/February

January/February quiz answers

- 1.** C – The sale, manufacture and transportation of alcohol
- 2.** C – Martin Luther King
- 3.** D – Rio de Janeiro
- 4.** C – Robert Burns
- 5.** B – 2002

Winner of the November/December quiz
Sarah Wheeler, Dorset

Station Cat


It is a far, far better thing I do today ...

Merseyside chief fire officer Tony McGuirk found retirement so enjoyable that he did it twice

JOHN HARRIS/
REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK




Pigs can fly ...

 Question: What does the boss do when he's told he has to cut a fifth of his staff salary bill? If I gave you ten guesses, you still wouldn't come up with what London Fire Brigade communications chief Richard Stokoe did, so I'll tell you.

The axe, Stokoe decided, stops here – and he made himself redundant, even though he hasn't got a job to go to. As a result, none of his staff will have to go. He told the trade magazine *PR Week*: "When I looked at it, any other staff leaving would have had a direct impact. I set the strategy, which is now in place, so strategists are not needed. We need doers."

... but not all


 And as if that's not enough, he added that other public sector PR bosses ought to think about following his example.

He said: "Unless there are real results in terms of delivering financial benefit, then people are going to have to look in the mirror very hard. Comms departments have less and less money to do things, whether it's campaigns or reaching out to people. Now what counts is delivery of frontline services."

Could this sort of behaviour become standard in the fire service? One day you might read this quote from a chief fire officer: "What counts is frontline firefighters, and making myself redundant will

save the jobs of ten of them, so that's what I'm going to do." Do you know, I've just looked out of my window, and there's a big fat pig flying past. Isn't that remarkable?

Retirement ...


 Mr Stokoe, then, puts his staff above himself. This cannot be said for Merseyside's recently retired chief fire officer, Tony McGuirk, about whom your cat has just learned some interesting news.

You remember Tony? He's the jovial fellow who told the press: "We've got some bone idle people in the public sector" and advised other public sector bosses to "show muscle, sack some people" – then, in 2011, retired at the age of 50, and then came back.


It's not clear why he did this, but he would have been eligible for a substantial lump sum payment out of the pension pot on retirement. Fairly soon after this, he retired again.

So how has Mr McGuirk been helping the fire service in its time of need since his second retirement?

... income

 Here's how. Mr McGuirk designed a portable sprinkler system, which was developed by a company called Aquamist, and is now in use by ... well, by Merseyside fire and rescue service, if you must know.

Blood money


 The fire department of Spokane, a small town near the Idaho

border in Washington State, has announced that it will no longer make routine calls to the county jail to take blood from alleged drink drivers booked into custody.

The jail has its own medical facility on which it spent around \$4m last year, but officials there said that using the fire service was cheaper than buying the extra equipment and hiring more medical staff.

In response, fire officials said that as many calls as possible needed to be cut in the face of budget cuts. It costs \$300 every time a fire truck is sent to the jail to take blood.

Justice delayed

 The jar of special cream in the cat's fridge will have to remain unopened for a few weeks longer.

It was being saved especially for a celebration on 6 February, the day that former London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) chair Brian Coleman was to stand trial for alleged assault and reckless driving.

Coleman used regularly to sneer at London firefighters from his City Hall eyrie, so his rapid downfall over the past year or so has not evoked a lot of sympathy in the capital's fire stations.

Coleman's misrule at LFEPA was only brought to an end when the good people of Barnet voted him out of the London

Assembly. He was then caught up in a disagreement on a busy shopping street in the London borough where he remains a councillor.

Helen Michael, a local cafe owner who led a campaign against parking charges introduced by Coleman, alleges that she saw the man nicknamed 'Mr Toad' breach the parking rules he himself pushed through.

"I saw him pull up in the loading bay," Ms Michael told the *London Evening Standard*, "which I thought was outrageous given that he was involved in bringing parking restrictions here."

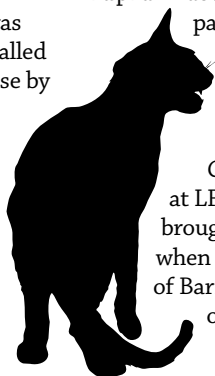
She took out her camera phone and started filming the incident. Coleman allegedly ran over and tried to grab the phone – at which point an undercover policeman who happened to be passing came to Ms Michael's aid.

She says that Coleman jumped into his car to try and make a getaway. But Ms Michael had other ideas, jumping in the passenger seat to prevent him.

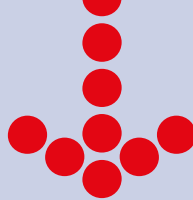
Ms Michael says that Coleman drove off anyway, with both doors still open, and then hit the back of a truck when she got out and Coleman sped away.

Alas, thanks to a scheduling conflict at Uxbridge magistrates it looks as though the cream will remain on ice until April. The Cat will keep you updated.

Station Cat does not take pleasure in the misfortunes of others. But, when the other is Brian Coleman, she's willing to make an exception.



25-year badges



Ivan Williamson (r), white watch, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Paul Cawte



Stewart Menzies (r), green watch, Musselburgh, Lothian and Borders, receives his 25-year badge from Martin Furby



Jayne Ward (r), West Midlands fire control, receives her 25-year badge from branch rep Jayne Mason



Mally Whipp (r), red watch, Kirkby, Merseyside, receives his 25-year badge from health and safety coordinator Gary Bennett



Jonny Mottram (r), South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from divisional rep Patrick Renshaw



Avon brigade secretary Chris Taylor (r), receives his 25-year badge from region 13 EC member Tam McFarlane with the Avon brigade committee looking on



Tony Reid (r), receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Martyn Rudd (r), white watch, Christchurch, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Scott Blandford



Raymond Finlayson (l), red watch, Inverness, Highlands and Islands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Calum MacNeill



Tim Roe (l), red watch, Stockhill, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from former Notts brigade organiser Ian Young



Dean Laursen (r), red watch, Peaks Lane, Grimsby, Humberside, receives his 25-year badge from NE Lincolnshire FBU chair Duncan Peddie



From left **Max Wall**, **Simon Carter** and **Taff Carr** receive their 25-year badges from branch rep Stuart Hicks and Jeff Shuttleworth of green watch, Weymouth, Dorset



Frank Pendlebury (r), South Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Mark Wild



Allen Westerby (r), receives his 25-year badge from region 13 EC member Tam McFarlane with red watch, Springbourne, Bournemouth, looking on



Mark Braithwaite (l), red watch, Harrow, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Rob Townsend



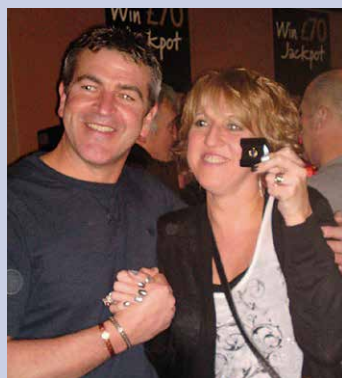
Mike Hobson (c), white watch, Warrington, Cheshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Jay Darling (r) with branch secretary Lee McGarity



Chris Board (r), Paignton, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Gould



Stuart Dalton (r), white watch, Cheadle, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Gary Illidge



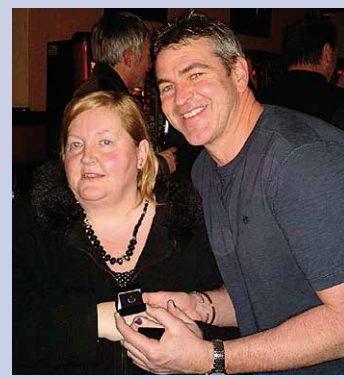
Diane O'Connell (r), Mobilising and Communication Centre, Merseyside, receives her 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst



Andrew Shepherd (l), white watch Central station, Nottingham, receives his 25-year badge from Steve Ainley



Sally Hayward (r), South Yorkshire fire and rescue control room, receives her 25-year badge from control branch secretary Liz Todd



Carol Bradshaw (l), Mobilising and Communication Centre, Merseyside, receives her 25-year badge from brigade organiser Brian Hurst



Shaun O'Neill (r), receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Tim Moore (c), receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Stuart Hicks, with Spencer Nicklin, Dave Edmondson and Simon Carter of green watch, Weymouth, Dorset,



Ian Haim (l), Devon and Somerset SHQ, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Andy Gould



Phil Foulds (r), red watch, Stockhill, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from branch chair Richard Lord



Stephen Nutter (r), white watch, Newbury, Berkshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Maurice Whyte



Dave Boucher (centre r), receives his 25-year badge from divisional secretary Billy Delve with blue watch, South Elmsall fire station, West Yorkshire



Andy Henderson (r), green watch, Bath, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Simon Lawson



Robin Parkes (r), West Midlands, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Pardeep Raw



Sid Pysden (r), West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Mick Cambers



Alastair Dunlop (r), green watch, Bath, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Simon Lawson



Gary Clayton (centre r), receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Clive Allen with blue watch, South Elmsall, West Yorkshire

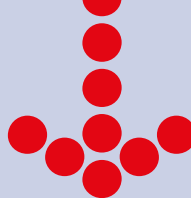


Martin Gallagher (r) Ormskirk, Lancashire, (former brigade chair) receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Steve Harman



Mark Arnott (2nd l), Silvertown, London, receives his 25-year badge from London rep Ben Hayes with (l-r) Ben Hayes, Mark Arnott, Rob Hill and Dave Harris

25-year badges



Roy Arnesen (l), blue watch, Berwick, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Amanda Cregin



Dave Hughes (l), Exeter group support, receives his 25-year badge from Devon and Somerset officers' rep Trevor Streat



Steve Fay (r), blue watch, Stratford, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



John Verry (l), Birchwood, Cheshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Dave Williams



Liam Mullan (r), receives his 25-year badge from region 6 secretary Gary Mitchell



Tim Leeks (r), A watch, Dovercourt, Essex, receives his 25-year badge from area rep Aston Everett



Terry Cacroft (l), blue watch, Greenbank, Devon and Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Lawrence Trerise



Steve Dummer (l), white watch, Chichester, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Dave Taylor



Simon Jewers (r), blue watch, Springbourne, Dorset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Scott Blandford



Dick Sargent (l), blue watch, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from brigade membership secretary Dave Taylor



Pete Hawkins (r), white watch, Telford Central, Shropshire, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



John Miller (l), green watch, Hayes, London, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Mark Clark

Please send photographic prints or digital picture files to: Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE or firefighter@fbu.org.uk. Please include full details for every picture – full names of everyone who is in it; their station/brigade/watch etc; where they are in the picture (eg: left to right); their union posts/branch if relevant; and where and when it was taken.

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Change of address or next of kin

Advise your Brigade Organiser of any change of address and Head Office of changes to next of kin or nominations for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE 0808 100 6061

The line provides advice for personal injury, family law, wills, conveyancing, personal finance and consumer issues.

For disciplinary and employment-related queries contact your local FBU representative.